

## **Toolbox Talk Training:** Avoiding Strains, Blows, and Pinches When Handling Portable Ladders

Accidents involving portable ladders often result in serious injuries, but even minor ladder-related incidents can cause pain, missed work time, and costly medical treatment. By staying alert and following safe work practices, we can help prevent many of these common injuries.

- **Prevent Back Injuries.** Ask for assistance whenever moving, setting up, or taking down heavy or long ladders. Long ladders place additional strain on your back because their length increases the force and leverage placed on your body during handling.
- **Work Smarter, Not Harder.** When setting up a long extension ladder against a wall, place the ladder flat on the ground with the feet positioned at the base of the wall. Lift the opposite end and carefully “walk” the ladder upward until it is standing vertically against the wall. Then slowly pull the base outward until the ladder is positioned at the correct angle.
- **Watch for Pinch Points.** Keep your hands and fingers away from pinch points when opening or closing a step ladder. The spreader bars and hinges near the top of the ladder can close like scissors and cause serious finger injuries.
- **Avoid Crushed Fingers.** Be careful not to place your fingers between the front and back sections of a folding step ladder while carrying or closing it. The ladder sections can snap together quickly and with significant force, leading to painful hand injuries.
- **Use Extra Caution Around Corners and Doorways.** When carrying a ladder through the work area, slow down near corners, doorways, and blind spots to avoid striking someone unexpectedly. Giving a verbal warning as you approach can also help prevent accidents. Lowering the front end of the ladder slightly while carrying it can reduce the risk of hitting someone in the face or head if contact occurs.

These are just a few of the common injuries associated with portable ladder use. By slowing down, planning ahead, and using proper handling techniques, we can reduce the risk of injuries to ourselves and others.

Can anyone share additional examples of accidents or injuries that could occur while handling or using portable ladders? Thank you for participating in today’s toolbox talk. Please remember to sign the training certification form before leaving so you receive credit for attending today’s training session.

